IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of determining an annotation for a document, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining a user-proposed annotation to be associated with the document; and

automatically determining, in accordance with a knowledge base, whether the user-proposed annotation matches at least one allowed annotation, wherein the user-proposed annotation may be associated with the document when the user-proposed annotation matches at least one allowed annotation.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of notifying the user that the user-proposed annotation does not match at least one allowed annotation, when no match is found.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of storing a user-proposed annotation/allowed annotation match, when a match is found.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of notifying the user that the user-proposed annotation matches more than one allowed annotation, when more than one match is found.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of automatically selecting a match, when more than one match is found.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user is notified of match results after each attempted matching operation.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user is notified of match results after a predetermined number of attempted matching operations.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining a history buffer of matches.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the history buffer is used to update a set of allowed annotations.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the history buffer is used to disambiguate matches.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the automatic determining step further comprises determining a closeness between the user-proposed annotation and the at least one allowed annotation.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the knowledge base comprises at least one term graph.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the automatic determining step further comprises the steps of:

determining a node in the at least one term graph that corresponds to the user-proposed annotation;

determining at least one node in the at least one term graph that corresponds to the at least one allowed annotation; and

computing a distance between the nodes.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein node determination comprises a stemming operation.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of annotating the document with the allowed annotation, when a match is found.

16. (Original) Apparatus for determining an annotation for a document, the apparatus comprising:

a memory; and

at least one processor coupled to the memory and operative to: (i) obtain a user-proposed annotation to be associated with the document; and (ii) automatically determining, in accordance with a knowledge base, whether the user-proposed annotation matches at least one allowed annotation.

17. (Original) An article of manufacture for determining an annotation for a document, comprising a machine readable medium containing one or more programs which when executed implement the steps of:

obtaining a user-proposed annotation to be associated with the document; and

automatically determining, in accordance with a knowledge base, whether the user-proposed annotation matches at least one allowed annotation.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of providing a service for determining an annotation for a document, comprising the step of:

a service provider deploying a system operative to: (i) obtain a user-proposed annotation to be associated with the document; and (ii) automatically determining, in accordance with a knowledge base, whether the user-proposed annotation matches at least one allowed annotation, <u>wherein the user-proposed annotation may be associated with the document when the user-proposed annotation matches at least one allowed annotation.</u>

19. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the annotated document is useable in a subsequent search.

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